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Over the past two months, I have had the pleasure of working as a Summer Legal Fellow at Western New England School of Law. During this time, I worked alongside Professor Tim Webster, researching international human rights law and the United Nation Human Rights Council in four Asian countries. Although this experience was far from typical, as the entirety of my research was done remotely, I found myself challenged and tested in new ways everyday. This experience allowed me to get a sense of how legal research is conducted, and gave me great insight into what I want to pursue in my future studies and ultimately my future career.

At the end of the spring semester, when things felt very uncertain, I was thrilled to hear that I would still get to participate in this program over the summer. I was continually impressed with, and grateful for the professors and administrators at WNEU, as they made the transition to remote work a stress free experience. When I began this program at the end of May, I was excited to hit the ground running, and begin research. When I was given my assignment, and I learned that I would be working with international law, I was excited that I would be working on something entirely out of the realm of what I typically study.

The main tasks that I completed were reading court cases from the United Nations Human Rights Council, summarizing them, theorizing why the court ruled the way it did, looking at how each country reacted to the court rulings, and what, if any laws were changed. I was fortunate to have the support of the Western New England library staff when I had questions about various platforms that I had to become familiar with, and I now have working knowledge of Westlaw.

I began the summer reading cases that originated in Korea and made their way to the Human Rights Council for review. I was tasked with reading and evaluating seventeen cases from this country. There were three common threads throughout all of the cases in Korea. The first being issues of freedom of speech being violated, the second being issues of freedom of religion, and the third being the right to education. Cases that originated in Korea often had something to do with the Korean military service requirement, and the various ways that individuals in the country attempted to avoid it. One example of the intersection of these three violations was *Communication No. 1786/2008*, where three hundred and eighty eight Jehova's Witnesses came together to file one lawsuit against the Korean government. This suit claimed that they should be excused from compulsory military service due to their religious beliefs. The Human Rights Committee, in this case, determined that the Republic of Korea was in fact in violation of human rights, as there is no way for a citizen to consciously object from military service. The committee determined that this was a violation of Article 18 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that every individual has the right to express their religion as they see fit.

The next country that I analyzed was the Philippines. There were eighteen cases that had originated in the Philippines and made their way to the Human Rights Committee. With these cases, at a higher rate than in Korea, the Committee found that the Philippine government was in violation of human rights. In fourteen of the eighteen cases I analyzed, the country was found to be in violation of one of the basic human rights laid out in the Declaration of Human Rights. There were only four cases where the committee could not find evidence that the country was engaging in a human rights violation, and all four were for the same reason. When the author of

the case brings the case to the committee, it is with the expectation that they have sought all feasible remedies domestically, and are looking to the committee as a last resort. In these four cases, the author had either failed to go through all of the necessary steps to exhaust domestic remedies, or they were attempting to get the domestic remedy overturned and lacked the evidence necessary to do so. The committee, in order to overrule a domestic remedy, needs there to be substantial evidence that the remedy was falsely provided, or that it was insufficient in regard to the harm caused. In these four cases, the author was not able to demonstrate the fact that their domestic remedy was insufficient, therefore the Human Rights Committee could not find a violation.

I then moved onto looking at cases in Nepal. There were twenty cases to look at in this country, all of which shared a very similar fact pattern. With these cases mostly occurring in the early 2000s, there was a lot of discussion of secret Maoist societies, individuals being disloyal to their government, and the government retaliating by imprisoning citizens. The most commonly violated article was the 7th, which deals with equal protection under the law. The cases that originated in Nepal were frequently stories of a man being kidnapped by masked soldiers in the streets, being thrown into prison, tortured, and essentially disappearing from life for as many as eighteen months in some cases. These cases frequently involved a concerned family member contacting the authorities when the individual in question went missing, and discovering that they were being tortured in prison. The Human Rights Committee has a record of being very anti-torture, which is clearly demonstrated by the fact that a violation was found in all twenty cases that originated in Nepal.

The final country that I researched was Sri Lanka, which had only thirteen cases to examine. Of the countries that I researched, Sri Lanka was the one with the most instances of the committee finding the case to be inadmissible. That was not the only notable finding, though. Unlike the other countries, in many of the Sri Lankan cases, the author filed the case as a violation of an article, but the committee found that the government was in violation of an entirely different one. An example of this comes from *Communication No 1249/2004*, where the author filed a complaint under articles two and five, but the committee found Sri Lanka to be in violation of articles eighteen and twenty six. Articles eighteen and twenty six deal with the right to freedom of religion and education, respectively. Articles two and five relate to freedoms being non-discriminatory, and protection from unreasonable detention, respectively. In this case, the committee determined that there were violations of human rights, and instead of rejecting the case in its entirety, they determined that the violation was egregious enough for a violation to be given.

The research that I was able to do this summer was incredibly interesting. I was able to look at international law in a way that I never have before, and I'm grateful for this experience. Throughout my time as a legal fellow, I have been able to develop my analytical, research, and writing skills, which are all things that will be useful to me as I continue my academic and professional career. I am grateful to Professor Webster for providing me with such thought provoking research to participate in, to the Western New England Law School staff for making this remote experience so pleasurable, and to Siena College and Dr. Cutler for encouraging me to apply for this program, and giving me the tools necessary to grow as a student over the summer.